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Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions

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Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note contains a summary of recommendations addressed by the Economic and Social Council to its functional commissions, in particular the Commission on the Status of Women. It also contains a summary of actions already taken by the Commission to implement those recommendations, as well as suggested recommendations for further action that the Commission may wish to take, or that it may wish to address to the Council.

* E/CN.6/2002/1.

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Introduction

1. The President of the Economic and Social Council, in a letter dated 8 October 2001 to the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/2002/10), drew to the Chairperson's attention the outcome of the substantive session of 2001 of the Council requiring specific follow-up by the Commission. Attention was also drawn to the policy recommendations contained in the selected resolutions and decisions adopted by the Council, specifically addressed to the functional commissions for systematic follow-up. The President invited the Chairperson to bring these policy recommendations to the attention of the Commission and take the necessary action to implement them.

2. In his letter, the President informed the Chairperson of the Commission that the Economic and Social Council had adopted draft resolutions submitted to it for action by the functional commissions, including those of the Commission. The President pointed out that the Council intended to devote some attention to the issue of submission of draft resolutions for adoption. In this regard, the Council had requested the Secretary-General to include, in the next consolidated report on the work of the functional commissions, an analysis of the practice of its functional commissions in the preparation of draft resolutions for action by the Council or the General Assembly, with a view to elaborating guidelines addressed to the functional commissions on the submission of draft proposals to the Council (Council resolution 2001/27 of 26 July 2001, para. 4).

3. The Commission's attention was drawn to the ministerial declaration of the Council's high-level segment on "The role of the United Nations in support of the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development",[1] and to its agreed conclusions 2001/1 on "The role of the United Nations in promoting development, particularly with respect to access to and transfer of knowledge and technology, especially information and communication technologies, inter alia, through partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector".[2] The President pointed out that, although these outcomes were not specifically addressed for action to the functional commissions, their policy and action recommendations could be usefully integrated into the work of the functional commissions.

4. The present note provides information on action taken, or to be taken, by the Commission in view of the resolutions and decisions of the Economic and Social Commission as adopted at its substantive session of 2001. Moreover, the note has been prepared to facilitate the Commission's deliberations under item 5 of the agenda of its 46th session, to be held in March 2002.

I. Background

5. Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B (item 8 of the agenda of the substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council), the Council has over the years paid particular attention to strengthening its coordination and oversight roles vis-à-vis its subsidiary bodies. Under this agenda item, the Council has adopted resolutions on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields and on cooperation. The Council has also continued its efforts concerning integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (item 6 of the agenda). Under both items, the Council has continued to provide specific policy guidance to its functional commissions.

6. In 2000, for the first time, the Economic and Social Council undertook a comprehensive assessment of the conference review processes. The Council emphasized the importance of the five-year review and appraisal for reaffirming the goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits; and recognized that the review processes also provided an occasion to identify obstacles and constraints encountered, actions and initiatives to overcome them and important measures for the further implementation of programmes of action as well as new challenges and emerging issues (see para. 1 of agreed conclusions 2000/2).[3]

7. In paragraph 8 of its agreed conclusions 2000/2, the Council invited its relevant functional commissions to consider a number of options, inter alia, those listed in paragraph 33 of the report of the Secretary-General on the assessment of the progress made within the United Nations system, through the conference reviews, in the promotion of an integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields (E/2000/57) and

other possible options, for enhancing the reviews of the major United Nations conferences and summits and to inform the Council for its consideration at its substantive session in 2001 of the outcome of their discussion. Following its forty-fifth session, the Commission, as invited, did inform the Council, in its decision 45/101 of 17 March 2001 on the follow-up to Council resolutions and decisions.[4]

8. In 2000, the issue of improved coordination among the functional commissions was also addressed. In its agreed conclusions 2000/2, the Economic and Social Council pledged with the support of its functional commissions to continue to promote a better coordination among them. The Council reiterated its commitment to support the General Assembly by providing recommendations on its policies for an effective, efficient and coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the major United Nations conferences and summits. In 2001, the Council adopted a further resolution on this topic, namely, resolution 2001/21 of 26 July 2001 (see para. 12 below).

II. Substantive session of 2001 of the Economic and Social Council

9. The Commission on the Status of Women could welcome the outcome of the 2001 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, in particular the ministerial declaration submitted by the President of the Council on "The role of the United Nations in support of the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development". The declaration addresses, among other issues, the importance of sustainable development and recognizes the need to promote the role of women in social and economic development, inter alia, through assuring their participation in the political and economic life of African countries. As regards the development of human capital, the declaration assigns high importance to achieving universal primary education, eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement of a basic education of good quality through, inter alia, the United Nations girls' education initiative.

10. Under agenda item 4, the Economic and Social Council also adopted agreed conclusions 2001/1 on the role of the United Nations in promoting development, particularly with respect to access to and transfer of knowledge and technology, especially information and communication technologies (ICT), inter alia, through partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector. The Council recognized that, while knowledge and technological development are among the critical determinants of economic growth and sustainable development, there is considerable concentration of knowledge, and the technologies deriving from it, in a limited number of countries. The Council also recognized that the majority of the world population still lives in poverty and many have not yet reaped the full benefits of the ICT revolution. In this regard, information and communication technologies need to be considered in the broader context of a developing country's overall priorities and socio-economic structure. The Council acknowledged that ICT could also contribute to the empowerment of women and to reducing gender inequalities. Best practices and lessons learned by countries and communities that have already implemented ICT programmes need to be drawn from and built upon. Developed countries should share with developing and transition economy countries their experience in promoting and establishing ICT sectors in their own economies so as to avert mistakes and maximize benefits. The Council encouraged the United Nations to continue and further efforts to, inter alia, assist developing countries and regional institutions of developing countries in building local, national and regional networks of partnerships suited to the demands of their particular circumstances and needs.

11. At its substantive session of 2001, the Economic and Social Council adopted a number of resolutions and decisions that either specifically called for action by the functional commissions or was provided as information. Particular attention was drawn above to Council resolution 2001/27 entitled "Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B: improving the working methods of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council". This resolution builds upon previous Council resolutions such as resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, specifically annex II thereto, which addresses, inter alia, improvement of the working methods of the functional commissions. The Council's policy guidance on this particular issue is essential to the effective execution of their mandates by the functional commissions.

12. At its substantive session of 2001, the Economic and Social Council also adopted, as noted above, resolution 2001/21 entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits". In that resolution, the Council, inter alia, recognized the need to continue to enhance its contribution to the coordination and implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits by bringing together relevant cross-cutting issues in a comprehensive and holistic assessment of progress achieved; and recommended that the General Assembly examine how best to address the reviews of the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s, including format and periodicity.

13. In its resolution 2001/39 of 26 July 2001, entitled "Genetic privacy and non-discrimination", the Economic and Social Council, inter alia, stressed the fact that revealing genetic information belonging to individuals without their consent might cause harm and discrimination against them in such areas as employment, education, and social and medical insurance; and requested the General Assembly to bring the resolution to the attention of all Governments and relevant international organizations and functional commissions in order to collect the information and comments received pursuant to it, and to submit a report thereon to the Council at its substantive session of 2003.

14. In its resolution 2001/41 of 26 July 2001, entitled "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system", the Economic and Social Council, inter alia, recalled its agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system[5] and called upon the Secretary-General and all bodies reporting to the Council to address the gender aspects of issues before the Council in their reports.

15. At its substantive session of 2001, the Economic and Social Council adopted two decisions relevant to its functional commissions. In Council decision 2001/299 of 26 July 2001, entitled "Themes for the high-level and coordination segments of the substantive session of 2002 of the Economic and Social Council", the Council decided to adopt "The contribution of human resources development, including in the areas of health and education, to the process of development" as the theme for its 2002 high-level segment and "Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration" as the theme for its 2002 coordination segment.

16. In its decision 2001/304 of 26 July 2001, entitled "Confidentiality of the 1503 (confidential communications) procedure", the Economic and Social Council took note of the deep concerns of some member States on the practice of forwarding confidential monthly lists from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat. The Council decided to consider that issue at its substantive session of 2002 following consideration of the issue by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-eighth session and the Commission's provision of concrete recommendations to the Council.

III. Action by the Commission on the Status of Women pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions

17. The Commission on the Status of Women welcomes the efforts of the Economic and Social Council to strengthen coordination among, and provide guidance to, its subsidiary bodies. In particular, the Commission has acted in accordance with the Council's mandates relevant to the Commission's work. Moreover, the Commission sees the importance of the consolidated report of the Secretary-General on the work of the functional commissions, to be submitted to the Council, and has provided input, as requested.

18. In this particular case, the Commission has complied with the request of the President of the Economic and Social Council to undertake efforts to systematically follow up on the policy decisions adopted by the Council at its substantive sessions. The Commission recognizes the importance of the report of the Secretary-General and, in recent years, has devoted sufficient time, in accordance with its agenda, to facilitating the discussion.

19. In the table below, the policy recommendations of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2001 addressed to the functional commissions or directly to the Commission on the Status of Women can be found in the left-hand column. Actions to be taken or already taken by the Commission, or recommendations for further action are set out in the right-hand column.

Notes

[1] See A/56/3, chap. III, para. 29.

[2] Ibid., chap. V, para. 7.

[3] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/55/3/Rev.1), chap. V, para. 8.

[4] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 7* (E/2001/27-E/CN.6/2001/14), chap. I, sect. B.

[5] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1), chap. IV, para. 4.

Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/21 entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits"

Policy recommendations of the Economic and Social Council	*Action taken by the Commission/action to be taken/recommendation for further action*
For information	The Commission on the Status of Women may wish to reiterate the importance of an integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. The Commission acknowledges the importance of reviewing and assessing progress achieved, lessons learned and problems encountered in the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. The Commission could also acknowledge the need to examine how best to address the reviews of the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s, including their format and periodicity. The Commission may wish to note that the Economic and Social Council has recommended that the General Assembly examine how best to address the reviews of the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s, including their format and periodicity (Council resolution 2001/21, para. 4). Prior to this recommendation, at its forty-fifth session, the Commission, in view of paragraph 9 of the political declaration[a] adopted by the Assembly at its twenty-third special session, had requested that a decision for enhancing the review of the progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action[b] and of the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly[c] should be taken in coordination with the conference reviews of other functional commissions (Commission decision 45/101). Moreover, as part of the multi-year programme of work for the Commission for 2002-2006, recommended to the Council for adoption by the Commission at its forty-fifth session, the Commission in 2005 will review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly (Council resolution 2001/4).

Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/27 entitled "Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B: improving the working methods of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council"

Policy recommendations of the Economic and Social Council	*Action taken by the Commission/action to be taken/recommendation for further action*
Para. 5: "*Encourages* its functional commissions to consider how best to ensure continuity in the work of their successive bureaux, and to that end requests the Secretary-General to include a summary of the functional commissions' views, if any, in the next consolidated report".	At its forty-fifth session, the Commission on the Status of Women considered the report of the Secretary-General on recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of the working methods of the Commission (E/CN.6/2001/8). By its decision 45/102, the Commission decided, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46, in particular annex II, to request its Bureau to undertake, with the assistance of the Secretariat, the preparatory work necessary for a further discussion of the working methods of the Commission at its forty-sixth session, building on the discussions that had been held during its forty-fifth session, and requested that adequate time be allocated to discussion of that matter during the forty-sixth session of the Commission. Among other matters, the issue of the election of the Bureau of the Commission was discussed in the report of the Secretary-General. As the Commission continues discussion on its working methods, it may wish to forward a summary on the issue of ensuring continuity in the work of successive bureaux for input into the Council's next consolidated report, as requested.
Para. 8: "*Encourages* the functional commissions to continue to keep their working methods under review".	As previously mentioned, the Commission discussed the enhancement of its working methods at its forty-fifth session in 2001 and will continue discussions during its forty-sixth session in 2002 in accordance with Commission decision 45/102.
Para. 10: "*Encourages* its functional commissions to consider, as appropriate and within existing resources, holding joint bureaux meetings to discuss coordination on issues that are addressed by two or more commissions, using information technology, as required".	The Bureau of the Commission held a joint meeting with the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council on 2 May 2001. The meeting discussed, inter alia, follow-up to Council guidance, synergies with other functional commissions, working methods of the Commission and contribution to the substantive session of 2001 of the Council. This was an interactive dialogue in which both bureaux provided guidance, information and suggestions in the effective execution of their respective mandates. On 21 June 2001, the Commission on the Status of Women held its second joint meeting with the Commission on Human Rights by videoconference. The bureaux discussed, inter alia, practical steps towards

Policy recommendations of the Economic and Social Council	*Action taken by the Commission/action to be taken/recommendation for further action*
	achieving cooperation between the two Commissions and follow-up to their first joint meeting, issues addressed by each Commission at its sessions that are of relevance to the other Commission, interaction through the 1503 procedure of the Commission on Human Rights and the confidential communications procedure of the Commission on the Status of Women, and participation of non-governmental organization in the work of both Commissions. The Commissions plan to convene a third joint meeting by videoconference in the near future.
Para. 15: "*Invites* its relevant functional commissions to assess, in greater depth, the impact of particular policies on achieving poverty eradication goals, and to identify good practices and lessons learned so as to increase the sharing of knowledge, including among functional commissions themselves".	The Commission could acknowledge that the issue of poverty has always been a major concern in the work of the United Nations and that the eradication of poverty remains an important issue in national and international agendas. The global United Nations conferences, reviews and summits have agreed to a set of goals and targets by Governments in order to combat poverty. Moreover, there has been growing recognition that poverty has a significant gender dimension, as evidenced in the report of the Secretary-General on the role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women (E/1999/53) as well as in Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/26 of 28 July 2000 on the same subject. In this case, recommended strategies emphasize the importance of achieving the goals of gender equality and empowerment of women in poverty eradication efforts. The issue of poverty eradication was reinforced in the United Nations Millennium Declaration[d] wherein Governments resolved "to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than a dollar a day" and "to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable". In its work, the Commission has assessed the impact of particular policies on achieving poverty eradication goals. At its fortieth session, in 1996, the Commission considered the critical area of concern: poverty, within the context of reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The deliberations resulted in the adoption of Commission resolution 40/9 entitled "Implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical area of concern: poverty".

Policy recommendations of the Economic and Social Council	*Action taken by the Commission/action to be taken/recommendation for further action*
	In its programme of work, the Commission has paid attention to the report of the Secretary-General on the role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women. As part of the new multi-year programme of work for the Commission for 2002-2006, recommended to the Economic and Social Council for adoption by the Commission at its forty-fifth session in 2001, the Commission will consider in 2002 the theme "Eradicating poverty, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle in a globalizing world" (see Council resolution 2001/4). It is expected that the outcome of the Expert Group Meeting on "Empowerment of women throughout the life cycle as a transformative strategy for poverty eradication", which will be held from 26 to 29 November 2001 in New Delhi, will provide the basis for the report of the Secretary-General on the subject, to be submitted to the Commission, as well as facilitate its discussion at the session of the Commission in 2002. The Commission may wish to increase collaboration with the Commission for Social Development to further identify good practices and lessons learned so as to increase the sharing of knowledge.
Para. 16: "*Also invites* its functional commissions to strengthen their attention to the role of information and communication technologies for development in their areas of responsibility".	The Commission welcomed the 2000 high-level segment of the Council on the theme "Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy" and, as mentioned above, agreed conclusions 2001/1, a product of the 2001 coordination segment of the Council. The Commission is aware of the importance of information and communication technologies (ICT) for development, particularly as regards women. In this regard, the Commission could further welcome the newly constituted ICT Task Force established by the Secretary-General in 2001 as a practical step aimed at strengthening the United Nations system's role in bridging the digital divide between developed and developing countries. Moreover, the Commission could stress the importance of integrating a gender perspective in the practical measures developed by the ICT Task Force. As mentioned in the previous note by the Secretariat on the follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions (E/CN.6/2001/10), submitted

Policy recommendations of the Economic and Social Council	*Action taken by the Commission/action to be taken/recommendation for further action*
	to the Commission at its forty-fifth session, many women worldwide still do not have access to ICT. Many women have yet to effectively use ICT for networking, advocacy, exchange of information, business, education and media consultation and e-commerce initiatives. In this respect, the Commission will discuss the issue of "Participation and access of women to the media, and information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women" in 2003 (see Council resolution 2001/4). The outcome of the discussions on the thematic issue will allow the Commission to provide input into the first phase of the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society, to be held in Geneva in 2003.

Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/41 entitled "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations"

Policy recommendations of the Economic and Social Council	*Action taken by the Commission/action to be taken/recommendation for further action*
Para. 3: "*Also calls upon* the Secretary-General and all bodies reporting to the Economic and Social Council to address the gender aspects of issues before the Council in their reports".	The Commission on the Status of Women has a central role as a functional commission in assisting the Economic and Social Council in monitoring, assessing progress made in and accelerating, within the United Nations system, the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and in advising the Council thereon. The Commission also has a catalytic role with respect to ensuring the integration of a gender perspective in United Nations activities. This mandate has been reflected in the Commission's work, including its new multi-year programme of work for the period 2002-2006.

Economic and Social Council decision 2001/299 entitled "Themes for the high-level and coordination segments of the substantive session of 2002 of the Economic and Social Council"

Policy recommendations of the Economic and Social Council	*Action taken by the Commission/action to be taken/recommendation for further action*
	At its substantive session of 2001, the Economic and Social Council adopted decision 2001/299 entitled "Themes for the high-level and coordination segments of the substantive session of 2002 of the Economic and Social Council". It was agreed that the theme for the 2002 high-level segment would be "The contribution of human resources development, including in the areas of health and education, to the process of development"; and that the theme for the 2002 coordination segment would be "Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration". The theme of the high-level segment provides an opportunity for the Commission on the Status of Women to provide input on human resource development, particularly as regards women. In the past and more recently, the Commission has focused on the thematic issues of health and education as being critical to gender equality and the advancement of women. In its resolution 1996/6 of 22 July 1996, section IV, containing the work programme of the Commission for the years 1997-2000, the Economic and Social Council decided that a priority theme in 1997 would be "Education and training of women", and in 1999, "Women and health". To prepare these themes for consideration by the Commission at its respective sessions, expert group meetings were organized. An expert group meeting on "Women and Health: Mainstreaming the Gender Perspective into the Health Sector" was organized from 28 September to 2 October 1998 in Tunis. From 2 to 6 December 1996, an expert group meeting on "Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning of Women" was held in Turin, Italy. A number of recommendations were formulated from these expert group meetings and directed towards Governments, the United Nations system, intergovernmental and regional bodies and civil society. Reports of the Secretary-General on these thematic issues were also prepared for the Commission.

Policy recommendations of the Economic and Social Council	*Action taken by the Commission/action to be taken/recommendation for further action*
	In 2001, "Women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS)" was one of the thematic issues for discussion during the Commission's forty-fifty session, pursuant to which agreed conclusions on the gender aspects of HIV/AIDS were adopted (see Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/5, sect. A). In recent years, this issue has been examined in a holistic manner because of its political, economic and social implications. The agreed conclusions address, inter alia, the importance of education and empowerment of women in combating the disease. The Commission is therefore equipped to provide input on gender aspects of health and education and their importance to human resource development, into the report of the Secretary-General on the theme of the Council's 2002 high-level segment. Members of the Bureau may also wish to participate in panel discussions of the Council in the relevant subject areas during the Council's substantive session of 2002.

Economic and Social Council decision 2001/304 entitled" Confidentiality of the 1503 (confidential communications) procedure"

Policy recommendations of the Economic and Social Council	*Action taken by the Commission/action to be taken/recommendation for further action*
	Prior to Economic and Social Council decision 2001/304, the Commission on the Status of Women, having considered the report of the Secretary-General, submitted to the Commission at its forty-fifth session, assessing the implications of the reforms of mechanisms in the human rights area (1503 procedure) for communications concerning the status of women (E/CN.6/2001/12) and views expressed in this regard by Member States, decided to request the Secretary-General to submit another report on the communications procedure of the Commission and ways and means to make it more effective and efficient, based, inter alia, on written opinions of Member States and taking into account discussions at the forty-fifth session of the Commission. The Commission also decided that the comprehensive report, which might contain recommendations, should be submitted to Member States in a timely manner prior to the forty-sixth session of the Commission for consideration at that session (Commission decision 45/103).

Notes

[a] General Assembly resolution S-23/2, annex.

[b] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[c] General Assembly resolution S-23/2, annex, and Assembly resolution S-23/3, annex.

[d] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.